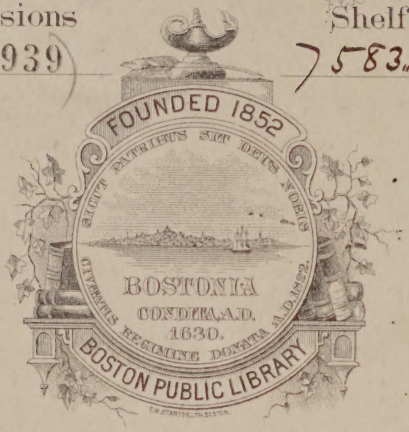
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Received, NOV 15 1990

LETTER

TO THE

LEGISLATURE OF MASSACHUSETTS,

ON THE REPEAL OF THE

LICENSE LAWS.

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NOV 15 1890

LETTER, &c.

To the Members of the Honorable the Senate and House of Representatives of Massachusetts:

GENTLEMEN,

The time, probably, is near at hand, when you will be required, in the exercise of your duty as Legislators, to vote upon the bill relative to licenses. It were useless to allude to the deep interest felt in this city, and throughout this state, with reference to that bill. It is sufficient to say, that no subject is more directly connected with the best interests---happiness---good order—the physical and moral welfare of the community.—How important then, that your minds should be divested of every worldly interest—of every prejudice, in relation to the Temperance Reformation.

A subject like this can sometimes be more forcibly illustrated by figure and fable, than by abstract reasoning. Let us suppose then, that the inhabitants of the State of Massachusetts had been supplied for one hundred and fifty years past, with

water issuing from a spring situated on a high hill in the centre of the State;—that the waters of this spring were let off through pipes to all parts of the Commonwealth; and that to prevent their waste, individuals were appointed in the several cities and towns to receive the water-pipes at their stores, whence the inhabitants by the payment of a small sum, obtain any desired quantity. The quality of the water was indisputable; it was regarded as a panacea—a cure for many of the diseases and ills of human life—as suitable for all occasions—indispensable in the work-shop—on the farm—in the store and counting house—as desirable among all classes of society—as necessary in every department of human labor. So universally is it made use of, that those licensed to sell it, accumulate thereby large sums of money, although the amount paid by each to the State for their privilege, is by no means inconsiderable. But in the year 1826 objections are raised against the use as a beverage, of this delectable spring water. A society having the good of their neighbor at heart, is formed, who attribute three fourths of all the pauperism and crime, and a very large proportion of the disease and death in the community, to the use of this water; they regard it as causing a general deterioration of body and mind which, if

the cause is continued, will increase. So positive are they that the proportion of the evils alluded to, may be attributed to this source, they engage an individual of acknowledged talents, piety, industry and sound judgment, to spend his time and use his best exertions, to do away if possible, with the use of this water. The physicians of the State are requested to pronounce their opinions on the subject, and the water upon analysis, is discovered to be not only unnecessary but hurtful to men in health, as an enemy to the human constitution in any quantity. Its influence upon the physical organs is considered by them to be unfavorable to health and life, as producing weakness, not strength—sickness, not health, death and not life. Societies, therefore, are formed in all parts of the State to discountenance its use; many engaged in the sale of it relinquish the business from conscientious scruples—the farmer ceases to use it—the mechanic discovers that he is better without it—the young and the old, the middle aged and the infirm, male and female, unite, and by means of addresses and lectures, the distribution of tracts and essays on the subject, endeavor so to enlighten public opinion that the evils complained of may be done away. To effect this object, petitions are sent to the Legislature signed by persons of moral worth and intelligence, that the laws

may be so amended as to withhold licenses from those who sell this destructive beverage. The Legislature is assured from sources the most authentic, and satisfactory, that three fourths of the inmates of the State Prison at Charlestown, attribute the commission of their crimes to the baneful influences of this water; that more than one half of the pauperism of the State (comprising *seven thousand five hundred and ninety persons,*) supported by a tax of about *one hundred and seventy thousand dollars* annually; and *one hundred and twenty-eight* of the cases of lunacy for five years past, in the State Lunatic Asylum at Worcester, together with more or less of the disease and death in the community, are the result, but not the aggregate result, of its direful effects.

Allusion may be made in the debate upon the license bill, to the large number of those engaged in this traffic—to their profits—their civil rights. But shall the morals of the community be longer sold for filthy lucre? Is the health, prosperity, happiness, nay the life of the *many*, to be legally jeopardized that the business of a *few* may be continued? God forbid. Must more families be made forlorn, poor, naked and miserable, that others may fatten on their numberless sorrows and live comparatively, as lords of the domain? And is that business, be it what it may, that has de-

stroyed the health, reputation and fortune of hundreds in the land, to be regarded by legislative enactments, as lawful and proper? If the sale of lottery tickets, which have ruined hundreds, is a penal offence, should not the selling of this water, the source of so many evils—of so much iniquity and death in the community, be also a penal offence?

As a former Legislature in their wisdom, considered the profits arising from the sale of lottery tickets as dust in the balance compared with the evils engendered by them, so should the present Legislature, in the opinion of many, regard the question of civil right to sell the spring water in question.

That the quiet, comfort, prosperity and happiness of this ancient Commonwealth, will be promoted and preserved by the passage of a bill, making it a penal offence to continue this traffic, except under certain additional restrictions, is evident from the happy results that have attended its prohibition in certain towns and counties in this State. The experiment has been tried, and works so well that the evidence in its favor is considered "perfectly incontrovertible."

That Heaven may direct you in the discharge of your duties as citizens and Legislators, is the prayer of A Citizen of Massachusetts.

Boston, March 27, 1838.

(Mar., 1890. 20,000)

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